

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2515

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a comprehensive national system for skilled construction workers to assist first responders in disasters.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 18, 2007

Mr. REID (for Mrs. CLINTON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a comprehensive national system for skilled construction workers to assist first responders in disasters.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Skilled Trades Second
5 Responders Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Skilled construction workers are essential to
9 effectively providing rescue and recovery following

1 manmade and natural disasters, and are vital to the
2 cleanup, demolition, rehabilitation, and reconstruc-
3 tion of disaster sites after recovery operations.

4 (2) Construction craft workers bring essential
5 skills in support of first responders, including demo-
6 lition (such as welding, cutting, burning, and rig-
7 ging), electrical and pipeline maintenance, hazardous
8 waste cleanup, equipment operations, and traffic
9 control.

10 (3) Construction contractors and employers also
11 provide essential equipment to disaster response ef-
12 forts, such as welding machines, backhoes, cranes,
13 dozers, skilled workers, and essential supplies for
14 site-specific needs.

15 (4) Historically, construction craft workers have
16 provided support skills to first response operations
17 after natural disasters, such as Hurricanes Katrina
18 and Rita; terrorist attacks, such as Oklahoma City,
19 the World Trade Center, and the Pentagon; and
20 manmade disasters, such as the Minneapolis bridge
21 collapse. However, there are no systems in place to
22 mobilize this workforce or ensure the effective inte-
23 gration of construction craft workers with first re-
24 sponder operations.

1 (5) The experience of earlier disasters reveals
 2 the need for a cohesive national, State, and local
 3 system of construction craft workers ready to serve
 4 their country and assist first responders in response
 5 to a disaster. The system should be designed to
 6 identify, train, certify, register, and integrate skilled
 7 craft workers into disaster preparedness and re-
 8 sponse activities, as well as provide training of con-
 9 struction craft workers in health and safety proce-
 10 dures to assist rescue, recovery, and cleanup activi-
 11 ties.

12 **SEC. 3. SECOND RESPONDER PROGRAM IN THE NATIONAL**
 13 **INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**
 14 **SCIENCES.**

15 Subpart 12 of part C of title IV of the Public Health
 16 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 285l et seq.) is amended by adding
 17 at the end the following:

18 **“SEC. 463C. SECOND RESPONDER TRAINING AND INTEGRA-**
 19 **TION PROGRAM.**

20 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Institute
 21 shall establish, as part of the Worker Education and
 22 Training Program of the Institute, a national program for
 23 the training, certification, registration, tracking, and inte-
 24 gration of skilled construction workers to assist first re-

1 sponders in responding to disasters, including natural and
2 manmade disasters and terrorist attacks.

3 “(b) CONTENT OF PROGRAM.—As part of the na-
4 tional program established under subsection (a), the Di-
5 rector shall—

6 “(1) develop a national plan for integrating
7 construction activities into State and local disaster-
8 response plans;

9 “(2) provide training for construction trainers
10 and workers, foremen, supervisors, and other indus-
11 try personnel on how to assist first responders and
12 integrate their efforts with first responders during
13 emergency response, rescue, recovery, and cleanup
14 activities;

15 “(3) provide specialized safety, health, and
16 skills training to construction workers on how to
17 protect themselves, coworkers, and the public from
18 safety and health hazards inherent in disaster re-
19 sponse activities;

20 “(4)(A) establish community-based registries of
21 certified skilled workers who are considered on call
22 and who can be identified and mobilized when need-
23 ed; and

24 “(B) pilot integration of such community-based
25 registries into a national registry system;

1 “(5) establish a national, State, and local sys-
2 tem to maintain the readiness of construction per-
3 sonnel and equipment through regular training, re-
4 certification, and exercises with first responders; and

5 “(6) develop agreements with construction in-
6 dustry contractors and joint labor-management orga-
7 nizations that have disaster response capabilities and
8 with designated first response coordinating agencies
9 for on-call responses in the event of a disaster.

10 “(c) COORDINATION.—In developing the national
11 program under subsection (a), the Director shall coordi-
12 nate and consult with the Department of Homeland Secu-
13 rity, including the Federal Emergency Management Agen-
14 cy, other relevant agencies, and private organizations, in-
15 cluding construction industry contractors, joint labor-
16 management training funds, and building trade unions,
17 that are experienced in providing rescue and recovery as-
18 sistance to first responders, and in the cleanup, demoli-
19 tion, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of disaster sites
20 after recovery operations.

21 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
22 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
23 \$35,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fis-
24 cal year. Such authorization is in addition to any other

- 1 authorization of appropriations that is available for such
- 2 purpose.”.

